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ABSTRACT

Being well prepared for teaching instills confidence within the teacher for teaching. The capstone of the university experience is student teaching whereby the preservice teacher is now ready to apply what has been learned sequentially. Students have already taken methods courses and courses in educational psychology. The university student, prior to student teaching, needs to meet with his/her cooperating teacher to discuss the following: which lessons and units have just been or are being taught; what he/she will be observing; how students are to be evaluated; how objectives are to be written for students to achieve; how the curriculum will be organized; and how students are to be disciplined. This paper discusses these elements in detail. The paper first notes several important things to emphasize as a professional in teaching. It then explains how to go about developing lesson plans, focusing on knowledge and performance objectives, skills, and the learning environment. It also discusses learning opportunities to achieve knowledge objectives. The paper next presents three models to indicate how the curriculum might be organized. It discusses assessment procedures, including different types of tests and informal observation and evaluation. Contains 11 references. (NKA)

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Psychology of Lesson Plans and Units in Reading.

by Marlow Ediger

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PSYCHOLOGY OF LESSON PLANS AND UNITS IN READING

Careful planning of lesson plans and units of study is important. Good planning does not mean success in teaching, but it certainly is salient to be well prepared each day for teaching pupils. It is unfortunate if teachers enter classrooms with little to show in the way of being prepared for teaching. Pupils do notice if a teacher is ill prepared for teaching any given day. Pupils may feel if the teacher is not prepared for teaching, why should they study hard and be accountable for doing well in school. Being well prepared for teaching does instill confidence within the teacher for teaching. In pre student teaching experiences, university professors have worked hard to get the student ready for the next challenge. That challenge is to get student teachers ready for teaching pupils in the public schools. There have been methods courses taken by university students prior to student teaching. There also have been educational psychology courses taken by the student. The capstone of the university experience is student teaching whereby the pre service teacher is now ready to apply what has been learned sequentially.

The university student, prior to student teaching, needs to meet with his/her cooperating teacher to discuss the following:

1. which lessons and units have just been taught or are being taught.
2. what he/she will be observing, prior to actual participation in teaching.
3. how pupils are to be evaluated in achievement.
4. how objectives are to be written for pupils to achieve. This brings in state mandated objectives into the discussion.
5. how the curriculum will be organized in terms of separate subjects, correlation, fused, or integrated procedures.
6. how pupils are to be disciplined and the student teachers role therein.

The balance of content will pertain to both pre and inservice education of teachers. The following are important to emphasize as a professional in teaching:

1. the teacher must always practice good human relations in working with other teachers.
2. the teacher needs to be able to plan cooperatively with others if team teaching is being implemented.
3. the teacher needs to develop a sense of community with pupils and develop mutual respect for all (Ediger, 2002, 16- 19).

Developing Lesson Plans

The teacher needs to establish clearly written objectives for each lesson and unit to be taught. These objectives need to reflect relevant knowledge ends. Knowledge must emphasize what is salient. Trivia and irrelevant subject matter need to be weeded out. Broadly stated general objectives stress the importance of major generalizations or the structure of knowledge. The broad, general objectives need to become more specific so they are meaningful to the teacher and he/she understands what will be taught. Thus, performance objectives may be written which state what a pupil is to do within each lesson and unit. Sometimes, it takes more than one lesson to implement what is stated in a performance objective. The following are examples of performance objectives:

1. the pupil will read a 200 running word selection from the textbook and tell in his/her own words what has been read.
2. the pupil will draw a picture covering content read.
3. the pupil will neatly label the completed picture.
4. the pupil will gather information, from self selected reference sources, which is directly related to the illustration. The pupil will place the summary underneath the illustration.
5. the pupil will give a brief summary of information collected.

With the use of performance objectives, it designates

1. who is to do what.
2. what is wanted to show achievement.
3. completeness to emphasize goal attainment (Ediger, 2002, 176- 181).

In addition to knowledge objectives, the student teacher also needs to stress skills ends. In doing something with the obtained knowledge, skills need emphasis. Knowledge needs to be used or applied in different situations or it will most likely be forgotten or become hazy. Reading, listening, speaking, writing, illustrating, reporting, locating, dramatizing, making models, and recording stress doing something with the obtained knowledge. If each of these is used with the obtained knowledge, pupils will find learning to be more purposeful, including reasons for achieving knowledge and that reason being uses which can be made of subject matter.

A third kind of objective, besides knowledge and skills, is attitudes. Good attitudes toward learning always assist pupils to

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achieve more optimally. Attitudes emphasize feelings which pupils have toward subject matter and toward skills to be acquired. Pupils need to like different curriculum areas in order to achieve more optimally. Liking a curriculum means to appreciate its being and wishing to gain increased knowledge and skills. It also emphasizes that pupils may wish to do extra work in an academic area. Learning in all cases cannot be fun, but the learner's interests and talents do need to be considered in ongoing lessons and units of study.

Each lesson in terms of objectives needs to begin with where the individual pupil is achieving at the present time. Learnings which are too difficult make for feelings of frustration on the part of the learner. The converse is true also in that objectives which lack challenge might well make for boredom. With twenty other pupils in the classroom, it makes it difficult for each pupil to be provided for in an adequate manner. The teacher then cannot observe all children as well as would otherwise be the case. Under the circumstances, careful observations are needed to provide for pupils' needs individually (See Aiken and Bayer, 2002).

There are definite needs which each pupil has and these may be in the affective or attitudinal dimension. A good model to follow was provided by the late A. H. Maslow (1954) which indicated the following needs of children which must be met:

1. Physiological needs. These include proper nutrition. A child cannot do well unless he/she experiences proper nutrition, sleep, and a kind of shelter which is clean and wholesome. A hungry person cannot do well in school. Quality school lunches and breakfasts are essential for all. After school programs such as latch key funding should include dinners. There still are weaknesses here in that pupils who come from poor homes economically may not be able to secure proper nutrition over the week ends and during the summer vacation. With summer school, there is a better chance for all pupils to get three good meals a day during the time school is in session. But there is also vacation time where there are voids in pupils receiving proper nutrition. Society needs to be highly accountable in each pupil receiving appropriate food. Proper and comfortable attire is also essential. ill fitting, unattractive clothes make studying and learning difficult. Pupils who come in this category may be teased negatively. This teasing can hurt and make for negative impressions. A clean, comfortable home, also, should be the lot of all in a prosperous nation. A leaky roof and/or a cold drafty house does not make for a conducive place to do homework, nor to do well in life, in general.

2. safety and security. If pupils do not feel secure, they cannot do their best in school and in society. Guns and bullies in school, abuse at home, and a lack of feelings of security in the home environment are very harmful situations for children which distract from achievement in school. Teachers and school administrators need to provide a school environment which helps pupils to achieve whereby safety and security are involved.

3. belonging needs. A pupil who is an isolate in school, without friends, makes life difficult for those who need to belong to a group. Being accepted by others is an essential need. The teacher needs to guide pupils to work successfully in groups within ongoing lessons and units of study so that feelings of belonging may be developed by all. Merely having pupils work in committees is not adequate. They need to achieve the objective of feelings of belonging. The concepts of caring, responsibility, and belonging are interrelated and need emphasizing in the school setting.

4. esteem needs. Pupils not only like to belong to a group, but also to be valued for what has been accomplished. In other words, pupils like recognition. All can be recognized in one way or another. To ridicule a pupil by the teacher or by other pupils should be taboo in any classroom and within the school setting. Rather, the teacher and pupils need to value and prize what each has accomplished.

5. becoming the kind of person desired. If a pupil is far removed from being what he/she would like to be, the teacher and other pupils in the classroom need to provide honest recognition of each pupil's achievement in school and in society.

There are many objectives then in personal and social development of pupils which the school must attempt to meet. These needs become objectives for teaching and learning. Motivation of pupils require that needs be met so that optimal achievement is possible. Learning styles theory has much to offer in terms of pupils achieving well.

What kind of classroom learning environment, according to learning styles theory, should there be for pupils to achieve as optimally as possible? There needs to be a noise level in which each pupil can learn and accomplish. A classroom which is too noisy makes for hindrances to learning. With a busy classroom where pupils are highly engaged might well make for some noise. A pin drop classroom may make studying and learning tense and anxiety producing. Why? Pupils may worry about the extreme

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quietness desired by the teacher and school administrator. To maintain a very quiet classroom is unnatural. Pupils who are actively involved in learning may make a little noise which is then not desired and may well make for reprimands by the teacher. There is then fear of being reprimanded. Pupils, too, learn under different ways of organizing the classroom for instruction such as informal versus formal setting arrangements, conformity versus nonconformity, as well as structured versus pupil choice in terms of what to learn, studying alone versus studying with others, preferring a collegial versus a more authoritarian teacher. Physiological factors enter in such as using auditory, tactual, and/or kinesthetic ways of learning. Moving around in the classroom such as working at different stations as compared to being seated at a desk for completing required tasks. In processes of learning, there are different pupils desiring to work in a step by step situation as compared to global leaning which moves from the general to the specific. Analytic learners prefer the abstract print as a way of learning as compared to global learners who prefer illustrations and pictured modes as ongoing learning opportunities (See Searson and Dunn, 2001).

Teachers then need to observe under which conditions pupils achieve as optimally as possible. There are a plethora of variables to focus upon to improve instruction. If a pupil prefers to work by the self as a learning style, he/she should have ample chances to do so. Learning to work collaboratively is also highly salient for selected pupils as a preferred learning style. Since human beings do things by themselves as well as with others in the societal arena, both styles of learning should be in the offing.

Learning Opportunities to Achieve Objectives

Once objectives have been clearly established as to what is relevant for pupils to learn, teachers need to choose learning opportunities which are developmental and provide for individual differences. Pupils differ from each other in a plethora of ways including interests, talents, abilities, and background information. A variety of activities and experiences should be available to pupils.

Multiple intelligences theory has become popular and might be used as a guide for teachers to use in choosing learning opportunities. The following intelligences are in the offing for making these selections:

1. verbal. Pupils with verbal intelligences excel in reading and writing experiences.

2. logical thinking. These pupils might well excel in mathematics where much logical thought is needed. Logical thinking is used frequently by individuals in society in the making of decisions.

3. musical/rhythmical. As the name indicates, these pupils like and excel in music, developmentally. At a relatively young age, pupils with musical talent may write poetry and put them to music. Rhythmic intelligence also stresses being interested in and showing talent in various kinds of dance activities.

4. interpersonal intelligence. Selected pupils like to learn best in group settings, rather than working by the self in ongoing activities.

5. intrapersonal intelligence. Here, pupils do best on an individual basis when pursing learning opportunities.

6. bodily/kinesthetic. These pupils learn best with learning opportunities stressing the use of the gross and finer muscles which emphasize kinesthetic learnings. Sports, games, and athletic endeavors stress the use of physical skills and abilities.

7. scientific intelligence. Objective thinking is very important in the science curriculum. It is equally salient in all curriculum areas as well as in society.

8. artistic intelligence. Selected pupils excel in art work and might well reveal best what they have learned through artistic endeavors. Creativity is important in art, but also in the decision making arena. Old solutions to problems might not work; therefore, creativity is necessary to think of the novel and unique when engaged in problem solving (See Gardner, 1983).

With multiple intelligences theory, pupils may reveal what has been learned in ways that indicate their individual preferred intelligence. Thus, for example, a pupil with artistic intelligence may show achievement in reading comprehension by a drawing a picture relating to and covering content read. Pupils need to develop proficiency in each of the above intelligences, such as developing creative abilities, since life itself demands that unique solutions are necessary in personal and social problems encountered. However, the personal talents possessed by each pupil need to be rewarded and encouraged.

Three models will be presented to indicate how the curriculum might be organized. First, the teacher may depend upon state mandated or district mandated objectives to use as benchmarks for teaching pupils. These are available to the teacher. Decision making for choosing objectives of instruction

is extrinsic to the local classroom. Externally the objectives have been chosen on the state level, far removed from the local classroom and with no teacher involvement. There might still be room for the teacher to select a few objectives, but this is minimal. The teacher is in the best position to select objectives due to the closeness in working with children, directly. Along with the mandated objectives are state mandated tests. These tests are aligned with the objectives to make for increased validity. Again, there is no input from the classroom teacher in terms of what should appear on the tests used to measure pupil achievement. Learning opportunities to guide pupils in objectives achievement may be selected by the teacher. Too frequently with much testing, teachers have used drill and had pupils memorize possible answers to test items. This, of course, does not emphasize meaning theory in teaching and learning. There might be threats of punishment if pupils fail to do well on tests. The punishment to be used might include

1. lower teacher salaries based on how much pupils achieve on state mandated tests.
2. school bankruptcy declared, with the state taking over, if achievement of pupils from a school on test results is inadequate.
3. pupils transfer out of a school at district expense to another school.

A mandated curriculum is so oriented to preciseness that students are less willing to take risks as readers and writers. Learnings become less meaningful to pupils. Teachers become afraid to digress from a mandated curriculum for fear of being fired from the job (See Meyer, 2002).

A second approach in organizing the curriculum is for the teacher to depend rather heavily upon the adopted basal textbook and its manual in the selection of objectives, learning opportunities, and assessment procedures. However, the teacher does need to make many decisions. A basal text is a flexible device. The stated objectives therein might be used as suggestions, meaning that the teacher may delete and/or add objectives deemed worthy to use in instruction. The same is true of teachers selecting learning opportunities, and assessment procedures. Thus, for example, the teacher may use a variety of learning opportunities such as reading materials which supplement the basal, video tapes, films, filmstrips, slides, CD ROMS, DVDs, teacher made teaching materials, learning centers methods, project procedures, the internet, among others used to provide for individual differences. The teacher may use varied

assessment techniques to ascertain learner achievement. These assessments may be interrelated to those stressed in the manual of the basal.

A third approach in organizing the curriculum is to emphasize heavy pupil input into the objectives, learning opportunities, and assessment procedures within ongoing lessons and units of study. The teacher's role, here, is to develop a curriculum which is intrinsic to the learner. To initiate a new unit in the curriculum, the teacher, for example, may use a related set of slides. These slides may provide background information for pupils in studying the unit. The teacher's demeanor is one which invites pupil's questions during and after the AV presentation. These questions are written by the teacher on the chalkboard as they are raised by pupils. Intrinsically, pupils have raised interesting questions for which desired answers are to be sought. The teacher assists pupils to work on committees or individually in seeking answers from a variety of reference sources. Concrete (objects, items, realia), semiconcrete (pictorial materials, drawings, sketches, models, and dramatizations), and abstract materials (reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities) might well be used by the teacher in providing for individual differences. The teacher wants pupils to be intrinsically motivated. From within, pupils feel motivated to achieve, grow, and learn. Pupils are strongly involved in helping to determine the curriculum. Their questions and answers pertain to personal interests which are intrinsic to learners. This is somewhat opposite of an extrinsically determined curriculum by people removed from the local classroom scene (Ediger and Rao, 2000, Chapter Eight).

Assessment Procedures

There are a plethora of assessment procedures available to teachers to use in appraising pupil achievement. Assessment procedures need to be valid. Thus, they need to cover that which was taught in the learning opportunities phase. One type of validity commonly emphasized is face validity. If the teacher develops test items, face validity stresses writing a test item for each concept or generalization taught. There may also be more than one test item written. For each objective taught, measurement experts say that three test items should be written. Reliability is important in that the test should measure consistently. For example, if a test is taken over again, the same pupil should receive the same percentile correct, approximately. There are several types of reliability which may be emphasized;

test/retest, equivalent forms, split half, and alternate forms.

With state mandated objectives of instruction, multiple choice test items are usually in the offing. Multiple choice test items generally have four distractors. The following is an example:

1. Which of the following is not a word recognition technique for pupils to use?
   a) phonics
   b) syllabication
   c) context clues
   d) rote learning.

In any well written multiple choice test item, the four distractors should be even in length so that clues are not given as to which is the correct answer. Each distractor should be plausible or reasonable. One of the following distractors is not reasonable and yet the author has seen it on a teacher written test when supervising university student teachers in the public schools:

The first president of the United States was
   a) George Washington
   b) Abraham Lincoln
   c) Mickey Mouse
   d) John Adams.

The above test item really has just three distractors because "Mickey Mouse" need not even be considered. If there were two ridiculous distractors, then a true/false test item would be in evidence. True/false test items leave room for much guessing in that the answer is one or the other, making for a fifty per cent chance of guessing correctly. The following is a true/false test item which is clearly "false:"

The Tropic of Cancer is a parallel 23 1/2 degrees south of the equator.

In a "false" true/false test item, the test taker may change what is incorrect to that which is correct. This eliminates much guessing, in terms of what the correct response is. Thus, the false part may be crossed out and the correct part written directly on top of it.

Essay test items leave the least room for pupil guessing. They can definitely lead to higher levels of thinking on the test taker's part. The following is an example:

1. Contrast the thinking of those who favor a national health plan versus those who do not. State advantages and disadvantages clearly for each position. To be sure, the above

test item could emphasize rote learning if the pupil has opportunities to preset ideas as they were presented word for word in class. Essay test items, however, should encourage pupils to think, deliberate, and come up with a creative response using subject matter presented in class.

Essay test item responses cannot be machine scored as is the case of multiple choice and true/false types. A rubric is useful then in evaluating each essay test response. The rubric spells out what is desired from the pupil. Thus, each of the following may be scored:

1. accurate content, clarity of ideas presented, and sequence of subject matter in proper order.
2. quality punctuation using commas and end punctuation marks.
3. neatness of response.

Each of the above named three categories may be weighted in terms of score points with a total of 100 possible. Certainly category one will receive the most emphasis, perhaps totaling 75 per cent. This category will spell out the subject matter to be expected in the response, such as specific advantages and disadvantages generally advocated in national health care systems. Category two is important in that inaccuracies occur in knowledge presentation when commas are left out or run on sentences are in evidence, as well as having incorrect or no end punctuation marks. Category three is important in that a sloppily done paper is difficult to score and evaluate. A lack of neatness also is viewed upon negatively by the evaluator of the essay responses (See Astleitner, 2002).

Matching test items may be used when measuring pupil knowledge of salient facts. The pupil then is to determine which item in column one matches with an item in the second column. Short phrases or concepts should be listed in both columns. It can be confusing to match column one with column two if both have lengthy sentences or even paragraphs. It is wise to have more items in one column as compared to the other so that the simple process of elimination may not be used. If the number of items are even in column one and column two, the pupil would be able to answer the unknown items correctly, with the process of elimination, due to answering correctly the initial test items known. An appropriate testing taking environment needs to be in the offing. Pupils need adequate time in taking the test. One exception is when pupils take standardized tests, the allotted time for test taking will be given in the manual section.

The following is an example of a matching test:

1. nouns	a) modifies a verb
2. verbs	b) indicates action
3. conjunctions	c) shows relationship between two words
4. prepositions	d) substitutes for a noun
5. adjectives	e) names a person, place, or thing
6. adverbs	f) joins words or phrases
7. pronouns	g) modifies a noun
8. interjections	h) words which show strong feelings.

The above matching test has the same number of items in each of the two columns. Thus, the process of elimination may be used by the test taker when matching column one with column two. If column two, for example, contained one or two more items, then less guessing would be involved in responding to those which are unknown. It is wise in test taking to match the items known from column one with column two initially. Why? If one or two are not known, the balance of the unknown has a better chance of being matched correctly. Generally, one item can be used only per test in matching. If an item can be used more than once in matching, that should be known to the test taker and given in the directions. It is important to test relevant facts in a matching test and not use this type of test for the sake of doing so. Higher levels of cognition such as critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving, should always receive precedence as learning opportunities (Ediger, 2002, 69-70).

Completion test items may also be used as a type to assess pupil achievement. The following are examples:

1. The end punctuation mark of a sentence asking for something is a _____.
2. Words in a series are separated with _____

The blanks should be equal in length so that a test taker does not receive information as to what is wanted due to the length of the blank. Adequate information should be inherent in a completion test item so that the test taker knows what is wanted. The following lacks this information: ____ and _____ are ____.

Informal Observation and Evaluation

A well trained, competent teacher can do an excellent job of

assessing pupils each day through careful observation of achievement. What does a teacher look for in assessing pupils when using careful observation? The teacher should notice if pupils appear to feel well. The chances are that a child who does not feel well will perform very inadequately in the classroom. A teacher is not a medical doctor, but does have close contact with each pupil in the classroom. A pupil may come to the teacher saying he/she does not feel well. Pupils who indicate that an illness is there should be referred immediately to the school nurse. Additional observations of pupils which can be made by the teacher include the following:

1. attention being paid to ongoing learning activities.
2. conscientious work being done in the classroom.
3. attitudes of respect shown to others in the classroom.
4. assisting other pupils when the assistance is needed.
5. wanting to learn more about concepts and generalizations studied in class.
6. diagnosing one's own work and working toward remediation.
7. achieving as optimally as possible.
8. writing journal entries pertaining to what has been learned and what is left to learn.
9. being responsible for one's own progress.
10. setting an example in providing for quality discipline in the classroom.

Two concepts need emphasizing here. One is formative evaluation which is done along the way while the unit is still being taught. the following steps might be used in formative evaluation:

1. pretest before a unit of study and adjust instruction for individuals or the entire group.
2. analyze which students need more help.
3. continually revise instruction on the basis of results.
4. reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching practices.
5. confer with students regarding their strengths and the areas that need improvement.
6. facilitate peer tutoring, matching students who demonstrate understanding with those who do not (Chappuis and Stiggins, 2002).

With formative evaluation, changes may still be made within the unit being taught. The second concept, namely summative evaluation, stresses that the unit has come to a close and

changes may be made pertaining to the next time the same unit title is taught. Changes may then be made pertaining to each of the following areas:

1. difficulty level of the objectives for pupil attainment.
2. grouping for instruction.
3. provisions to be made in providing for individual differences.
4. learning opportunities to be provided for pupils.
5. assessment procedures which provide valid and reliable information.

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